U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission
Home Electrical Safety Audit
Room by Room Checklist

To obtain maximum benefit from your electrical safety check—

Identify—Use the checklist to spot any electrical safety problems which may be present in your home

Correct—Take appropriate action to remove or correct any problems which you spot.

Re-inspect—Periodically re-inspect using this checklist to be sure that no new electrical safety problems have developed

LIVING ROOM/FAMILY ROOM

In a living room, you should check your lighting, its cords, extension cords, heaters and TV/audio equipment

✔ CHECK THE WATTAGE OF ALL BULBS IN YOUR LIGHTS.	
• Are the bulbs the appropriate wattage for the size of the fixture? *Especially check bulbs in ceiling fixtures and in "hooded" lamps that will trap heat.*	A bulb of too high wattage may lead to fire through overheating
☐ Yes ☐ No →	Replace with a correct wattage bulb If you don't know the correct wattage, use a bulb no larger than 60 watts
✔ CHECK ALL LAMP CORDS AND EXTENSION CORDS	
• Are cords placed out of the traffic areas?	Tripping hazard may result. Also, stepping on cords can damage them, leading to a fire hazard
☐ Yes ☐ No →	Keep cords out of the way of traffic areas

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• Are cords free of furniture resting on them?	
☐ Yes ☐ No →	Keep furniture off cords
• Are cords in good condition (not frayed or cracked)?	Shock and fire hazards can result from damaged cords
☐ Yes ☐ No →	Replace cords not in good condition
• Are cords unwrapped (that is, not wrapped around themselves or an object of any kind)?	Tightly wrapped cords can lead to overheating
☐ Yes ☐ No →	Keep cords free
• Are any cords attached with nails or staples to the wall, baseboard or another object?	Cord damage can result, presenting a fire or shock hazard
☐ No ☐ Yes →	Remove any nails or staples
Note The following items in this section pertain to extension cords only	
• Are all extension cords equipped with safety covers on the unused receptacles?	Children and pets can be shocked or seriously burned through contact with uncovered outlets
☐ Yes ☐ No →	Use safety covers
• Are any extension cords carrying more than their proper load? *Check the electrical rating on both the appliance and the extension cord*	Overloaded extension cords are a fire hazard
☐ No ☐ Yes →	Replace overloaded cord with proper size heavy-duty type

• Are all extension cords being used *only* on a temporary basis?	Extension cords are not as safe as permanent house wiring
☐ Yes ☐ No →	Have receptacles installed where they are needed

✔ CHECK ALL WALL OUTLETS AND SWITCHES

• Do all unused outlets have safety covers placed in receptacle openings?	Shock hazard can result if children insert objects into outlets
☐ Yes ☐ No →	Purchase inexpensive safety covers for all unused outlets
• Are all outlets and switches working properly?	Improperly operating outlets or switches indicate an unsafe wiring condition may exist
☐ Yes ☐ No →	Have an electrician check them
• Are all outlets and switches cool to the touch?	Unusually warm outlet or switch may indicate an unsafe wiring condition exists
☐ Yes ☐ No →	Unplug any cord or stop using the switch and have an electrician check
• Do electrical plugs fit snugly into all outlets?	Loose-fitting plugs can cause overheating
☐ Yes ☐ No →	Have the outlet replaced
• Do all outlets have a faceplate so that no wiring is exposed?	Exposed wiring is a shock hazard
☐ Yes ☐ No →	Install faceplates

CHECK TELEVISION, RADIOS AND OTHER HOME ENTERTAINMENT EQUIPMENT.

• Are all the cords in good condition?		Damaged cords are a fire and shock hazard
☐ Yes	☐ No →	Have damaged cords replaced
• Is the equipment placed so that the cord will not trip someone walking by?		
☐ Yes	☐ No →	Move equipment so that cords are not in a traffic area
• Is the equipment placed so that air can freely circulate around it?		Blocking air flow to equipment can cause overheating.
☐ Yes	☐ No →	Allow the equipment to "breathe " Avoid enclosing in a cabinet without proper openings and don't store papers around it
• Is the equipment placed in a dry location, free both of rain and any other sources of water?		Mixing electricity and water may result in a fire or shock hazard
☐ Yes	☐ No →	Relocate equipment as necessary Move water sources such as plants and aquariums

CHECK PORTABLE ELECTRICAL HEATING EQUIPMENT.

• Does it bear a seal of a nationally-recognized testing laboratory?		Heaters not tested by nationally-recognized testing labs provide less assurance that safety features are adequate
☐ Yes	☐ No →	Take added precautions in using this equipment.

- Is it placed away from combustibles such as drapes and newspapers?

☐ Yes ☐ No → Move equipment away from combustibles

- Is the equipment stable and placed where it will not be tipped over?

A fire hazard can result if a heater is tipped over Animals and even blowing drapes can be factors

☐ Yes ☐ No → Place heater where it will be stable and not likely to be tipped over

- Is the heater in good working condition?

Operating problems may indicate an unsafe electrical condition

☐ Yes ☐ No → Have the heater repaired or replaced

- If an adapter is used in the outlet to connect a heater with a 3-prong plug, is the adapter ground wire or tab attached to the outlet?

The grounding feature provided by a 3-hole receptacle or an adapter for a 2-hole receptacle is a safety feature designed to lessen the risk of shock Never defeat the adapter's grounding feature

☐ Yes ☐ No → Properly ground heaters with 3-prong plugs

KITCHEN

Many of the checkpoints listed for the living room will also apply to the kitchen Although no space is provided below, be sure to check lights, extension cords, outlets and switches in the kitchen just as you did in the living room In addition, check the following

CHECK ALL COUNTER TOP APPLIANCES

- Are these appliances unplugged when not in use?

Unattended, plugged-in appliances create an unnecessary risk

☐ Yes ☐ No → Unplug when not in use

- Are all appliance cords placed so that they will not come in contact with a hot surface? *Pay particular attention to cords around toasters, ovens and ranges*

Cords can be damaged by excess heat

☐ Yes ☐ No → *Relocate cords away from any heat source*

- Are all appliances located away from the sink?

Electrical appliances are particularly hazardous if they come in contact with water

☐ Yes ☐ No → Relocate away from the sink area

CHECK ALL LARGE APPLIANCES

- Have you ever received even a slight shock (other than one from static electricity) from any of these appliances?

☐ No ☐ Yes → Don't touch until appliance has been checked by an electrician

- Is the top and area above cooking range free of combustibles (for example, potholders, plastic utensils)?

Using range area for storage of non-cooking equipment may result in fires or burns

☐ Yes ☐ No → Remove combustibles from range

- Is there excessive vibration or movement when the washer or dryer is operating?

Movement during operation can put undue stress on electrical connections

☐ No ☐ Yes → Level the appliance If excessive movement continues, call the appliance dealer

CHECK FOR GROUND FAULT CIRCUIT INTERRUPTERS (GFCI'S)

- Are the circuits providing power to the counter top outlets equipped with GFCI's?

GFCI's can prevent many electrocutions CPSC recommends their use in kitchens, bathrooms and other areas where the risk of electric shock is high

☐ Yes ☐ No → Consider having GFCI's installed

BATHROOM

The major hazard in a bathroom is the potential combination of electricity with water So in addition to checking lighting fixtures, outlets and switches, check the following

CHECK FOR GROUND FAULT CIRCUIT INTERRUPTERS (GFCI'S)

- Are the bathroom outlets protected by GFCI's?

GFCI's are required for the bathroom by most current building codes However, older homes may not be equipped with GFCI's

☐ Yes ☐ No → Consider having GFCI's installed Note that portable GFCI's are available

- If you have GFCI's, do you test them regularly?

GFCI's must be operating properly to protect against electrocution

☐ Yes ☐ No → Regularly test the GFCI's in accordance with manufacturer's instructions

CHECK SMALL ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES SUCH AS HAIR DRYERS, CURLING IRONS AND RAZORS (IT IS A GOOD PRACTICE TO MINIMIZE THE USE OF ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES IN A BATHROOM, PARTICULARLY WHEN USED NEAR WATER)

- Are they unplugged when not in use?

Plugged-in electrical appliances (even when switched off) may result in an electrocution hazard if they fall into water

☐ Yes ☐ No → Unplug when not in use

- Are they in good condition? *Pay particular attention to erratic operation and damaged wiring or other parts*

☐ Yes ☐ No → Discard or have repaired

- Are portable heaters ever used in bathroom?

Portable heaters, used in bathrooms where there is water and many grounded surfaces, provide a high electrocution risk

☐ No ☐ Yes → Don't use portable heaters in bathroom

BEDROOMS

As you did with the living/family room and kitchen, check all lamps, cords, extension cords, audio visual equipment, heaters, outlets and switches even though no space is provided below In addition, check the following

CHECK YOUR ELECTRIC BLANKET

- Is it in good condition? *Look for cracks or breaks in wiring, plugs and connectors Also, look for charred spots on both sides of blanket surfaces*

Any of these conditions indicate a potential fire hazard

☐ Yes ☐ No → Discard

• Is anything covering the blanket when in use?	When covered by other blankets or comforters, electric blankets may overheat (This includes pets sleeping on top of the blanket)
☐ No ☐ Yes →	Don't allow anything on top of the blanket when it is in use
• Is the blanket used flat?	Folded back blankets may overheat
☐ Yes ☐ No →	Don't fold back electric blankets
• If tucked in, is it done in accordance with the manufacturer's instruction (so that the heating coils are not bent around the corners)?	Damaged coils may result in a fire hazard
☐ Yes ☐ No →	Don't bend coils

BASEMENT/GARAGE/WORKSHOP

Most of the hazards found in the other rooms in the house are present even to a greater extent in the basement, garage and workshop because of the nature of the environment and the activities performed there

✔ CHECK ALL POWER TOOLS AND OUTLETS	
• Are all power tools equipped with a 3-prong plug or marked to indicate they are double insulated?	These safety features reduce the risk of electric shock
☐ Yes ☐ No →	Consider replacing older tools lacking the safety feature

CHECK FUSE BOX OR CIRCUIT BREAKER BOX

- If fuses are used, are they the correct sizes for the circuits?

The wrong size fuse can be a fire hazard.

☐ Yes ☐ No → ☐ Don't Know →

Install the correct sizes If correct sizes are unknown, consider having an electrician identify and label the sizes to be used

- If circuit breakers are used, do you periodically turn them off and on to exercise their mechanism?

Circuit breakers must be "exercised" periodically to keep them in good working order

☐ Yes ☐ No →

Turn off the freezer, refrigerator and air conditioner Flip each circuit breaker three times off and on. Do this once a year Turn the appliances on after doing this.

- If GFCI's are installed, are they periodically tested?

GFCI's should be tested to assure they will operate to protect against electrocution.

☐ Yes ☐ No →

Follow the manufacturer's instructions to test the GFCI's

☐ No GFCI's

OUTDOORS

Like the basement, garage and workshop area, the outdoor area can present a number of hazardous conditions

CHECK ALL RECEPTACLES LOCATED OUTDOORS

- Does each outlet have its own waterproof cover?

Moisture can get into outside receptacles and cause a malfunction, resulting in possible shock hazard

☐ Yes ☐ No →

Have the proper waterproof covers installed and keep them closed on unused outlets

• Are the outside receptacles protected with ground fault circuit interrupters?	GFCI's are required for the outside circuits by most current building codes However, older homes may not be equipped with GFCI's
☐ Yes ☐ No →	Consider having GFCI's installed Note that portable GFCI's are available

CHECK ELECTRIC LAWN MOWERS AND OTHER ELECTRICAL GARDEN TOOLS AND APPLIANCES

• Are power cords in good condition (no cracks, exposed wires, etc)?	Damaged cords are a shock and fire hazard
☐ Yes ☐ No →	Have damaged cords replaced
• Is the equipment in good working order (that is, no abnormal or erratic operation)?	Abnormal or erratic operation may cause unsafe conditions to occur
☐ Yes ☐ No →	Have the equipment repaired or replaced
• Are extension cords used outside specifically marked for such use?	Cords not made for outdoor use may not withstand the greater abuse resulting from outside use This may result in a fire or shock hazard
☐ Yes ☐ No →	Use only extension cords marked for outdoor use
• When using products equipped with 3-prong plugs, do you use the proper extension cord (one with 3-prongs)?	Products with 3-prong plugs are designed to lessen the risk of electric shock
☐ Yes ☐ No →	Obtain the proper grounding type extension cord (one with 3-prongs)

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